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Asbestos Manhattan Industrial Products Company

Textile Group

Location: North Charleston, S. C.

To: John Marsh

Date: June 28, 1974

Subject: McGill Study of Asbestos Safety Garments

As I told you in our telephone conversation earlier this week, I read thoroughly all the documents that you sent to me over last weekend. I wish to point out that this is the first time that I have ever read the reports of the McGill's Study and, incidentally, your report on the visits to BBA and TBA plants plus the ILO Conference that was held in Geneva.

Admittedly, I did not absorb as much of the "McGill Study" as I should have when I discussed it with you on Tuesday of this week. I misunderstood the agreement which allows McGill to release a report in the public press. After our conversation, I studied it more carefully and have several comments to make.

Earlier in the year, you asked John Hawkins to submit a critique on the McGill report and he replied to you in a memo dated March 6, 1974. John Magenheimer commented on John's memo with a report to you dated March 12, 1974. You replied to John Hawkins with another memo which is dated March 15, 1974. On that memo I would offer my opinions.

John Hawkins was not quarreling with Dr. Gibb's credentials. He accepts that Dr. Gibbs has a "worldwide reputation as an expert on the biological effects of asbestos." All he was trying to say, if I may paraphrase, is that the test procedure that he used in determining whether or not wearing asbestos protective garments presented a health hazard to the worker was conducted on a scientific basis. Essentially, I agree with his premise. If his report should be published in any scientific journal, I believe that it would be extremely damaging, not only to the prime producers of asbestos textile materials, but to the entire protective clothing industry. It is also subject to criticism because of the supporting data as to what type of clothing was being tested.

Let me be more specific. Yesterday I checked with A-Best Products Company in Cleveland to find out exactly what was tested at "Plant No. 1" which we purchased from them for exercise. The coat, and mitts, were manufactured from our Style L-71-1173 which is an acrylic treated 2.50 lb. fabric. The hood was manufactured from our Style 20H120 cloth which had been combined with a mirror-bright aluminized finish by 3M Company. The dust counts accumulated from these tests on workers at U. S. Steel, Pittsburgh, while not really satisfactory, are admittedly within the current tolerable limits.

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CRMC-Motley1000-Subj-002262

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Now lets look at the results from "Plant No. 2" which was the phosphorous producing plant in Canada. It is written in the report that there was absolutely no way to determine the source of the protective clothing that was used by the workers at that Plant. No one knows whether or not the basic fabric had been coated or not. The dust counts presented by Dr. Gibbs made me wonder whether or not the hood was, indeed, an aluminized asbestos fabric. We asked John Magenheimer to check with Dr. Gibbs and receive the information on Thursday that the technician who observed the test is sure that the hood was not a mirror-bright aluminized asbestos cloth. It is his recollection that it was white in color. Was it treated or untreated? The very high dust count readings obtained at Plant No. 2 would indicate that the hood was manufactured from untreated asbestos cloth.

I apologize for the length of this memo. It seems to me that to have a valid scientific test for dust counts on people using asbestos fabric in protective equipment, dust counts should have been taken before the man put on the hood. They should have also been taken after he put on the hood. It is my contention that the generally unsatisfactory dust counts which were obtained were entirely the result of wearing the hood. Logic (but no scientific evidence to this point) tells me that there should be no danger to a worker wearing an asbestos coat or using asbestos gloves or mitts. Dr. Gibb's test neither confirms nor denies this contention.

John Hawkins is starting an immediate development program to come up with a 20H120 type fabric which will have a coating on the back side of the fabric which would be the side toward the wearers face. We will first approach the people who supply the bright aluminum finish. We will then approach the manufacturers of hoods and other protective garments. We will caution both of these classes of industry as to the potential hazard of wearing hoods with uncoated asbestos cloth on the inside. We think that this approach will solve the problem.

Milt
Milton Q. Scowcroft

MQS/cob

cc: P. G. Dolan
J. W. Hawkins
Dr. J. J. Magenheimer - Stratford
Dr. J. T. Trainor - Stratford

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CRMC-Motley1000-Subj-002263

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